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# The University of Maryland and the National Park Service

## A Formidable Partnership in Historical Archeology

**H**istorical archeology has been a major component of the Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), for more than 16 years. Many training opportunities attract students from around the country and around the world. Several students have been trained in the ongoing project “Archaeology in Annapolis” under the direction of Mark Leone. As of January 1997, a renewed cooperative agreement between the National Park Service (NPS), National Capital Region (NCR) and (UMCP) has generated additional historic preservation opportunities in historical archeology. This agreement has been an important step to generate student support in the Anthropology Department’s B.A. and M.A.A. program.

While education is a major emphasis of the NPS, the agency has become a unique partner to UMCP. The two institutions have created a productive working relationship that supports student training and internships. In return, students have generated valuable research for the NPS, allowing it to interpret, monitor, and protect cultural resources in new and innovative ways. The projects generated by the students also help sustain the agency, because sparse base funding and staff limitations have curtailed many necessary projects.

The cooperative work between the two organizations is facilitated by the Master of Applied Anthropology (M.A.A.) program, developed in the Department of Anthropology in 1984. The M.A.A. is a two-year professional degree for those interested in the practice and application of anthropology in careers outside academia. Skills are developed through internships with professionals in related and complementary fields. The archeology program has consistently worked with archeologists in federal, state, and local governments, and those in the private sector. The M.A.A. program works well because traditional masters theses are replaced with projects. Students are expected to produce a product related to the internship, instead of a thesis.

Regional Archeologist Stephen R. Potter has generated several archeology projects carried out by the NPS and the Department of Anthropology, UMCP since the beginning of 1997. Many projects go beyond Section 106 compliance needs and add an additional dimension to NPS archeology projects.

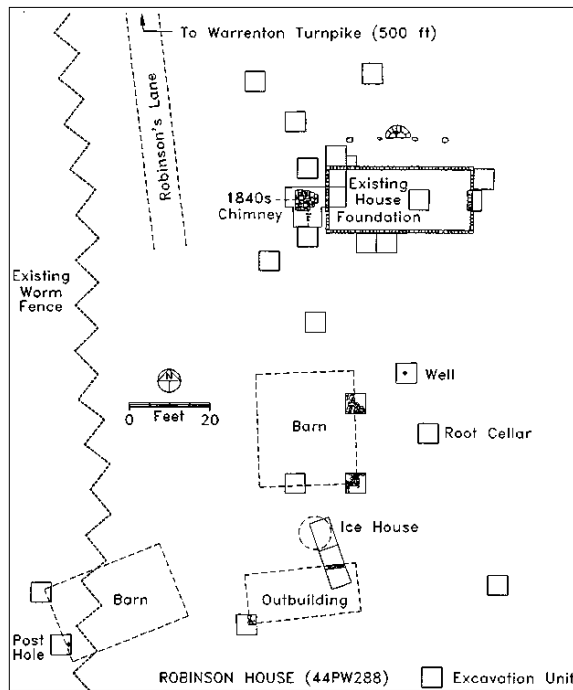
One such case is at the Robinson House, at Manassas National Battlefield Park. The Robinsons were a free African-American family that occupied the same house from 1840 through 1936. The house is recognized as a significant

landscape feature since it was part of the Civil War battlefield landscape during the First and Second Battles of Manassas. Arsonists burned the structure in 1993, and it was dismantled. The stone foundation and chimney remain, symbolizing an African-American family’s life and struggle to survive during Jim Crow (Martin et al 1997:157). An M.A.A. intern is currently expanding on the Park’s General Management Plan (MANA1983) by investigating domestic life within a battle area. The project, being

*The Robinson House at Manassas National Battlefield Park housed the same free African-American family from the 1840s through 1936. It was burned by arsonists in 1993. Photo courtesy Manassas National Battlefield Park.*



Site plan of the excavation units placed round the Robinson House and yard.  
Illustration by John Ravenhorst.



done by Erika Martin, includes ceramic and glass vessel analysis, currently in progress. This work will allow the park to place the Robinson family's consumer behavior within the changing social relationships of Northern Virginia and "enhance understanding of the shifting social relations found within a community inhabited by both African Americans and whites" (Shackel et al. 1995; Little and Potter 1995; Potter 1997b).

In another project at Manassas National Battlefield Park, the park is proposing to stabilize the one-story Sudley Post Office. Because the stone foundation needs repair and repointing, the work will require ground disturbance around the structure. Before any fabric treatment, archeological work and analysis are being undertaken around the building. The purpose of the project is to locate, identify, evaluate, and recover a sample of any archeological resources that may be impacted by the stabilization of the building (Potter 1997a). Matthew Reeves, a recent Ph.D. graduate from Syracuse University, is the project director, and as many as six UMCP graduate and undergraduate students are working under his direction in the field and in the laboratory. This interdisciplinary project has shed new light on the history of the property and related structures. Historical research shows that the building was probably present much earlier than anyone had previously suspected. The structure is considered nationally significant since it housed injured soldiers during the First Battle of Manassas. In 1871 new owners constructed an extension that housed a post office to cater to the growing community, thus the name—Sudley Post Office. The Sudley Post office became an important center for the community and many

local residents still reminisce about the post office. After 1903 the structure was inhabited by an African-American family (Reeves 1997). While the archeology has unearthed little related to the mid-19th-century occupation, a large feature that later served as a trash pit has been uncovered and the materials are related to the early-20th-century African-American family. The feature corresponds to the same time as the materials under analysis for the Robinson house. It is quite significant that the archeological investigations at the two areas in the park provide a much broader analysis of the sites. They go beyond the park's traditional battle-field interpretations and contribute to more inclusive histories of the community.

Three students are also learning the NPS Automated National Cataloging System (ANCS), under the direction of Marian Creveling. They are cataloging archeological collections from several national parks. These collections have been uncataloged for many years and this work allows the agency to become more accountable for the material culture that they oversee and monitor. While learning this complicated cataloging system, students will also learn storage and curatorial techniques.

An M.A.A. project has also been completed by UMCP graduate student, Jennifer Moran, at Rock Creek Park. Established in 1890 Rock Creek Park is one of the oldest national parks in the national park system. It is also one of the largest forested urban parks in the United States. The archeology done in the 1890s by William Henry Holmes provides an example of some of the earliest professional and scientific archeology work performed in the country. As part of a larger Cultural Landscape Inventory project, Moran's work documented the presence of prehistoric and historic archeological sites, assessed the conditions of

Excavations along the walls of the Sudley Post Office, Manassas National Battlefield Park.  
Photo courtesy University of Maryland and National Capital Region, NPS.



University of Maryland interns, Jenn Moran and Erika Martin, discuss distribution of archeological artifacts at Rock Creek Park. Photo courtesy Paul Shackel.



archeological collections, and placed this information on a GIS database. This information will become a valuable tool to help park staff monitor archeological resources.

While still in its early stages, the cooperative program between the NPS-NCR and UMCP has already enjoyed several successes. The cooperative programs generate opportunities for students to work within an applied setting in an archeological context. Their work is funded by the NPS. In turn, the agency receives a product that will help them to interpret, monitor, and protect cultural resources under its jurisdiction.

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Excavations in the yard of the Sudley Post Office, Manassas National Battlefield Park. Photo courtesy University of Maryland and National Capital Region, NPS.

